

# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO **NEWSLETTER**

May/June 1998

Volume XXIII Number 3

## Penstemons: The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico

by Jean Heflin, 1997, Jackrabbit Press, \$20.  
Book Review by Tim McKimmie

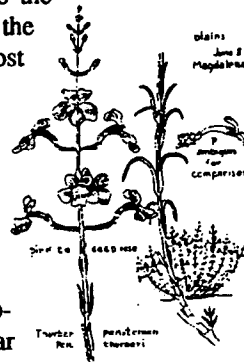
There is something about penstemons that seems to attract many people. After all, how many other wildflowers have their own society of followers? Part of the attraction, of course, is the distinctive tubular flowers, many of which are also attractive to hummingbirds. In addition, perhaps it's the stateliness, height, and "presence" of some species. Gardeners in the west also enjoy them for their hardiness and tolerance to the extremes of our climate, be it drought, heat, cold, or wind. Further, the distribution of the (nearly 300) species worldwide is restricted almost exclusively to the western United States, Mexico, and Canada.

This work, the second effort on penstemons by the author, is much improved. (The first work with Erma Pilz was done in 1990 and titled "The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico: A Field Guide to New Mexico Penstemons".) The major change is the addition of color photographs by the author's husband. They add tremendously to the book and tend to capture the essence of the various species. Line drawings also accompany many of the descriptions. These are by Robert Dewitt Ivey and many of them also appear in his book "Flowering Plants of New Mexico".

Although there are 47 species and subspecies described here, the average reader is unlikely to encounter more than 20 or so in N.M.. Several are known only from herbarium records and may no longer occur in N.M.. The interested reader may, however, be motivated to locate some of the hard to find species in adjoining states.

Entries are arranged alphabetically and include common names and the citation to the literature establishing the current scientific name. Many include historical names and type locations as well. Unfortunately abbreviations used in this section are not explained. Each description contains information on: "Plant Height and Growth Habit" (stout, spreading, hairy, waxy); "Flowers" and "Calyx" (color, shape, length, spike shape, lower petal or throat characteristics); "Leaves" (shape, texture); and "Stamens" (description of staminode or "beardtongue", anthers). The description of the habitat, elevation, etc. where the plant is likely to be found is essential for there is no key. Beginning users will turn to the color plates (74 of them) for an initial identification, then to the descriptions.

New Mexico plant lovers will be delighted with this book and its \$20 (hardcover) price. The lack of a key is a problem but the work is still very useful. Also included is a section titled "Penstemons in the Garden" that provides useful information about propagating and growing your own penstemons. It includes notes on the requirements of particular species that may make your gardening efforts more successful. The work is indexed by both common and scientific name and includes references to the literature concerned with Penstemon identification and propagation. (See ad in this *Newsletter* for availability).



## NPSNM Produces Landscaping Guide

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico announces the publication of *Chihuahuan Desert Gardens: A Native Plant Selection Guide*. This is the first comprehensive guide that is written primarily for the Chihuahuan Desert. The book is edited by Greg Magee, NPSNM board member and landscape architect, and Tim McKimmie, NPSNM Publications Chair and Agriculture Librarian at New Mexico State University. A product of more than two years of planning, this work is intended to help educate the public regarding the use of native plants in landscaping. A similar project covering the northern part(s) of New Mexico is also under discussion. The 32 page Guide is intended for the novice gardener but will be useful for anyone desiring to use native plants in their landscapes.

The guide contains descriptions and color photographs of 75 native plants, including trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and succulents. All of the plants are native and will grow well in southern New Mexico, west Texas, and northern Mexico. A list of native plant sources and a guide to cultivation are also included. The guide represents the efforts of more than 15 contributors from New Mexico and west Texas.

The work includes references to the best recent books on desert landscaping. The price is only \$7 (discounts available for large orders) and all proceeds go to the NPSNM, a non-profit organization. Free copies will be made available to school teachers with classes in botany, landscaping, horticulture, etc. The release of the book coincides with

cont'd p. 2

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the campaigns by several New Mexican and west Texas cities to use more water-conserving plants. The book is available in Las Cruces at Bowlin's Mesilla Book Center on the Mesilla Plaza, the Las Cruces Natural History Museum in the Mesilla Valley Mall, and Enchanted Gardens Nursery off Stern Drive in Tortugas. For more information, contact Lisa Mandelkern at 526-0917 in Las Cruces or Lisa Johnston, NPSNM book sales, 1814 W. Currier, Artesia NM 88210, 748-1046.

(See review page 3)

Many thanks to Robert Dewitt Ivey for permission to use the wonderful drawings from his book *Flowering Plants of New Mexico*, in our *Newsletter*.

The *Newsletter* is published six times per year by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. The Society is composed of professional and amateur botanists and others with an interest in the flora of New Mexico. Original articles from the *Newsletter* may be reprinted if fully cited to author and attributed to the *Newsletter*.

Membership in the Native Plant Society of New Mexico is open to anyone supporting our goals. We are dedicated to promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment, and to the preservation of endangered species. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve the state's unique character and as a water conservation measure. Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges, and educational forums. A wide selection of books is available at discount. The society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld. Contact our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative for more information. Call chapter contacts for local information.

**Advertising Schedule**  
Approved advertisements will cost \$50 per year.

**Membership Fees**  
Dues are \$12.00 annually for individuals or families. "Friends of the Society" include organizations, businesses, and individuals, whose dues of \$25.00 or more provide support for long range goals. To join us, send your dues to Membership Secretary, NPSNM, POB 5917, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5917

**Newsletter Contributions**  
Please direct all contributions for the newsletter to Tim McKimmie, editor. See address below or email to [tmckimmi@lib.nmsu.edu](mailto:tmckimmi@lib.nmsu.edu)  
**Deadline for the next newsletter is June 1.**

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## Chihuahuan Desert Gardens: A Native Plant Selection Guide

Greg S. Magee and Tim McKimmie, Editors  
Copyright 1998. Native Plant Society of New Mexico

### Book Review by Dean Ricer

Texas and Arizona have their native plant guides, as do several other states. Now we have one for southern New Mexico. All members of the New Mexico Native Plant Society can be proud of this accomplishment.

The first 5 pages are worth the price of the book. The principles and practices for converting to a native landscape are well covered. Most of the 7 principles of Xeriscape™ are covered in the discourse. The reader is carefully warned about some of the pitfalls to avoid as well. The Garden Maintenance section is especially helpful. Perhaps this publication will do much to change some peoples perception of desert landscaping as just a lot of gravel with a few yuccas and cacti planted for interest.

Reading through the descriptions is a delight to any native plant enthusiast including myself. There are any number of plants I would like to see included, but, the line has to be drawn somewhere. The inclusion of other species and varieties along with the bibliography gives the reader the opportunity to look for more information on other plants.

The descriptions of the individual plants is complete enough and clear enough to give the gardener the basics for incorporating the plant into their landscape. The photographs, also, are of sufficient quality and clarity to create the desire to have the plant in the garden where it can be enjoyed every day.

This book should be distributed to as many local retail and wholesale nurseries as possible. Perhaps local chapters should take this on as a project. Especially helpful is the inclusion of the names and addresses of those businesses making native plants and seeds available to the public. Ultimately, though, it is the customer demanding native plants that will result in their being more available. Anyone who has struggled with the problems associated with reproducing a plant, with no book to tell them how it's done, can appreciate why a certain plant is more expensive to propagate than another. In time, when more plants are available and more people are growing them, the prices will moderate for popular species; even those that are difficult to propagate.

All in all the book is interesting, colorful, informative and light enough to carry in your portfolio when you go to the local retail nursery. It is a publication that I will show to as many groups as possible in order to "sell" our native plants to a wider audience. Tim and Greg deserve our thanks for a job well done.

### Some Flower Hiku By Elva Osterreich

Flower allegory is  
Damn yellow compositing  
Sitting in the rain

Snakeweed, aster  
Sun smile, composite grace  
But Oh, what thistle!

What a trashy yard!  
Dandelion, silverleaf  
Nightshade and crabgrass

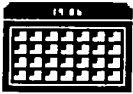
White poison flower  
African rue entangles  
Deep roots, deep sickness

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## CALENDAR

### GILA

May 17 - All Around Silver City-a tour of native plant gardens in and around Silver City. Pot Luck to follow at Joann Hoagland's  
June 21 - Willow Creek above Mogollon. 8:00 am, WNMU Fine Arts Lot.

### OTERO

May 9 Plant Sale, Alamogordo Garden Center, 9-1  
June 6 Oliver Lee State Park Plant Identification, 8 am

**September Board Meeting** of NPS will be held in Albuquerque September 12 at 10 am in the Herbarium Conference Room, basement of Casetetter Hall on the campus of the University of New Mexico. Tim Lowery, director of the Herbarium will welcome us, and following our meeting at 2 pm there will be a tour of the Herbarium. Agenda items and other information will be available about August 1st; please contact John Stockard, Secretary, or Mary Whitmore, President, for more details. Guests are always welcome at our Board meetings which are held at least twice a year.

### Notes:

The Nature Conservancy will collaborate with the US Dept. of Defense to study the ecology of the White Sands Missile Range.

Dave Anderson, botanist for the White Sands Missile Range reports that 1033 species and varieties have been found there.

The World Wildlife Fund will spend \$10 million to study and protect the Chihuahuan Desert, "...perhaps the richest desert in the world in terms of the diversity of its plants and animals".

Otero County leads the fight against noxious weeds in New Mexico with a new 12 page publication titled: **Noxious Weeds: a threat to Otero County and Southern New Mexico.**

Austin Texas will be the home of the American Botanical Council's **National Medicinal Herb Education and Research Center**

**Solar-98**, a conference on solar energy, will be held at the Albuquerque Hilton, June 13-18, 1998. The theme will be "Renewable Energy for the Americas". Workshops include solar heating, adobe and straw bale construction, and xeriscaping. Exhibits include solar ovens and photovoltaics. Technical sessions include refrigeration, distillation, utilities, and materials. Contact Bill Gross at: [wgross@unm.edu](mailto:wgross@unm.edu) or 505-242-5785

**Herb Society of America**, West District will meet in Santa Fe June 26 and 27. Call Robin for details at (505)984-5058 or by e-mail [rdbdb@concentric.net](mailto:rdbdb@concentric.net)

### LAS CRUCES

May 13 "Show and Tell". 7:30 SW Environmental Center, 1494 S. Solano  
May 17 Field trip to the Florida Mtns. 7:00 am. Fairacres Post Office, Hwy 70  
June 10 "Gardening" by Lisa Mandelkern. 7:30 SW Environmental Center  
June 14 Field trip to Cloudcroft. 7 am. K-mart Hwy 70.

### ALBUQUERQUE

May 7 "New Mexico Trees and Shrubs" by Jack Carter. 7:30 pm, Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas  
May 17 Field trip to Ojito  
June 4 "What's New in Native Trees" by Mike Melendrez. 7:30, Albuquerque Garden Center  
June 27 Field trip to the Sandias

### Butterfly Counts

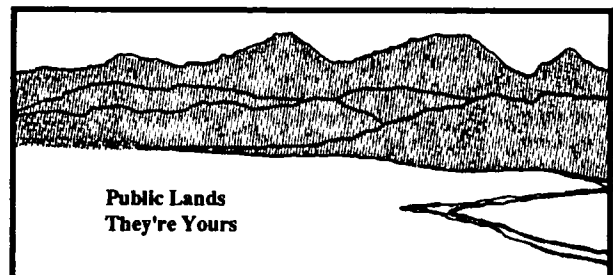
Butterfly counts require lots of volunteer participants. Among the butterfly counts in New Mexico for 1998 are the following. Please call to volunteer

Los Alamos: June 24 and 27. Contact Dorothy Hoard, 662-2662

Santa Fe: July 8 and 11. Mimi Hubby, 983-1658

Albuquerque: July 16, 18, and 25th. 344-7240

Las Cruces: early August, Greg Forbes, 524-9562



## CHAPTER REPORTS



### Albuquerque - Jean Hefflin

27 people attended the meeting of March 5 to hear Jon Stewart report on the current status of the Albuquerque Botanical Garden. He showed slides of some of the work being done on the Children's fantasy gardens. Construction is scheduled to take two years. His slides of the summer bloom were beautiful, bright and well-focused. The Spanish Moorish Garden will be changed to include trees along the walls to soften the look. Iceberg climber roses will be planted by the posts to form a future roof covering. No more weddings will be held there due to vandalism. Construction of the railroad that is to run between the Bio park and the zoo is high on the agenda. A portion of San Gabriel park will be used for the railroad turn-around. The Mediterranean Conservatory has had some problems with the climate control computers. Plants were not blooming but they discovered that super phosphate brings on fast bloom. They are trying new plants for Albuquerque to see if they are cold hardy. The Xeriscape is watered about once a week. A curandera garden is to be started this spring. On the Saturday following the meeting a field trip to the Conservatory was attended by a small but enthusiastic group. Mary Ann Syroid

April 2 meeting. The meeting was pleased to have Mary and Paul Whitmore attend. Mary brought the group a short review of the State NPS activities and showed the new NPS booklet on Chihuahuan desert gardens. The chapter hopes to have them in time for the plant sale April 25. Pearl Sunrise, the featured speaker, was born at Whitewater on the Navajo reservation. She talked about how the indigenous plants were used by her people for all the necessities of daily life, until the arrival of the Spaniards who brought the churro sheep. For the Navajos all plants have a definite purpose and are never gathered without offering appropriate prayers. Only enough for immediate needs are gathered. The knowledge of how to use the plants is gained by apprenticeship, in Pearl's case by working with her mother. Pearl showed slides of many rugs and discussed the sources of natural dyes and mordants.

### Las Cruces - Lisa Mandalkern

March Meeting; Las Cruces Chapter The feature presentation of our March meeting was a one hour documentary film entitled "Survivors in the Sand", produced by the award-winning Electronic Media Unit at New Mexico State University. The film examined arid lands in Australia, Israel and the Southwestern United States. Arid lands were defined as areas where the annual rainfall is less than ten inches, and drought is the rule, not the exception. Some of the topics discussed in the film were: joint research projects, water conservation, sustaining the astonishingly rich biodiversity of arid lands, establishing grass banks, controlled burning and stopping overgrazing and soil erosion. All these measures have the goal of reversing trends of desertification. Additionally, the film showed researchers at Jornada Experimental Range studying long term trends of arid lands. The scientists used computer generated models to predict future conditions of arid lands. One of their many findings is that damaged arid lands unfortunately cannot be easily restored. This documentary film is available at the NMSU library.

The Las Cruces chapter March field trip was to the Robledo Mountains, just minutes west of Las Cruces. We hiked slowly for about three and a half hours into the foothills through typical lower Chihuahuan Desert shrubland. We were all delighted to find so much succulent plant life: several *Opuntia* species including *Opuntia leptocaulis* with fruit, *Echinocereus fendleri*, many clustered specimens of *Coryphantha macromeris*, *Escobaria vivipara*, numerous tiny specimens of *Mammillaria lasiacantha* in bud, *Mammillaria grahamii*, *Echinocactus horizontalis* (from tiny seedlings to mature specimens), *Ferocactus wislizeni*, impressive specimens of *Ancistrocactus uncinatus*, colonies of *Agave neomexicana*, *Fouquieria splendens*, *Dasyliirion wheeleri* and many specimens of *Echinocereus coccineus* in bud and one specimen in full bloom. From our highest spot in the hills we enjoyed the view of the Mesilla Valley and several mountain ranges including the Organ Mountains, their peaks lightly covered with snow. We came across one horned lizard and saw quail ramps installed at two stock tanks. There were also many plants in flower: *Astragalus* spec. (Locoweed), *Rafinesquia neomexicana* (Desert Chicory), *Nerisyrenia camporum* (Bicolored Mustard), *Erodium cicutarium* (Alien, Red stemmed Filaree), *Erodium texanum* in bud (Texas Heronbill), *Dalea formosa* mostly in bud (Indigobush), *Oenothera* spec. (possibly *O. primiveris*, Spring Primrose), *Sphaeralcea* spec. (Globemallow), *Cryptantha* spec. (Hiddenflower), *Lepidium montanum* (Peppergrass), *Phacelia* spec. (Scorpionweed). Two plants stood out: the delicate and beautiful *Anemone tuberosa* (Desert Anemone) and the small but smashing purple mats of *Stenandrium barbatum* (Shaggy *Stenandrium*). John Freyermuth took a small segment of Mormon Tea Bush home and identified it later as *Ephedra aspera*.



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# CHAPTER REPORTS



Otero - Jean Dodd

2-24-98 NPS-Otero Newsletter

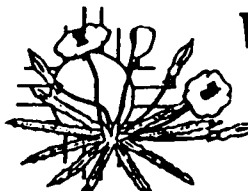
On 21 February at the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped Dr. Geoffrey Carpenter spoke about ~iodiversity in Southem New Mexico~.Dr. Carpenter has worked in research and management in the Chihuahuan Desert in southern N.M. and northern Mexico,natural resource management on military lands, and is the owner of Southwest ~iomes,Inc.. He is also affiliated with UNM and NMSU. He spoke about the fact that a lot of biodiversity has not yet even been described. Many people think of the desert as a barren place when in fact it is teeming with life. Landscapes are diverse especially because of variations in topography which makes for climate variations producing landscape mosaics of ecological units. There are meta or scattered populations as well as niche territories. Most of the slides showing the parts of ecological units included his favorite subject-reptiles. Otero has great biodiversity-many different plant communities. For rare and endangered species see State of New Mexico "Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of New Mexico~ edited by Bob Sivinski and Karen Lightfoot. Some of the threats to biodiversity are extinction which is normal but we are seeing very rapid extinction now Human populations have expanded. They require more room,more resources, thus causing habitat destruction. Pollution,introduction of EXOTIC species,unlawful collecting water tables are going down,siltation,acid rain,glohal warming, and fire suppression In August we are going to White Sands Missile Range with excellent botanist David Lee Anderson who is contributing much to the study of the area. The Nature Conservancy is collaborating on the study and protection of the unique ecology of the White Sands Missile Range. In July we will go to a full moon program at WhiteSands Monument to hear Jennifer Atchley talk about working on the World Wildlife Fune study of the Chihuahuan Desert. They are spending \$10 million dollars on 5 areas, one of which is the Chihuahuan Desert. Several of our members have made trips with Dr. Spellenberg of NMSU and his graduate students to study the desert in Mexico,especially the oaks.

Gila-Martha Carter

The March 20 program on the topic, "Penstemons, The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico", presented by Jean and Bill Heflin of Albuquerque attracted many members and guests anxious for winter to be finished so that spring gardening can begin. They were not disappointed. The Heflin's presented information and slides of every penstemon known to exist in "The Land of Enchantment". They have traveled throughout New Mexico to view and photograph the 46 species and distinct subspecies known to grow here. Jean and Bill are authors of a recently published book by the same name. It is illustrated with 74 full-color photos of penstemons blooming in the wild, and 36 detailed drawings by well-known author and illustrator, DeWitt Ivey. For the amateur, it contains a complete cross-index of the flower's common names; for the botanist, each species' full Latin terminology. For anyone who cares, it's cross-referenced to the New Mexico Rare and Sensitive Species Lists. A chapter titled, "Penstemons in the Garden" gives those interested in raising their own "beautiful beardtongues" practical advice on where to get them, how to grow them from seeds and cuttings, which work best in various conditions and how to protect them from pests.

Those species Jean recommends for gardens of southwest New Mexico are: Pineleafor Pine Needle Penstemon, *Penstemon pinifolius*; Desert Penstemon, *Penstemon pseudospectabilis*; Rocky Mountain Penstemon, *Penstemon strictus*; Palmer's Penstemon, *Penstemon palmeri*; Parry's Penstemon, *Penstemon parryi*. Some of these may be obtained in containers from nurseries and others will need to be grown from seed. Under no circumstances should they be dug and transplanted from the wild.

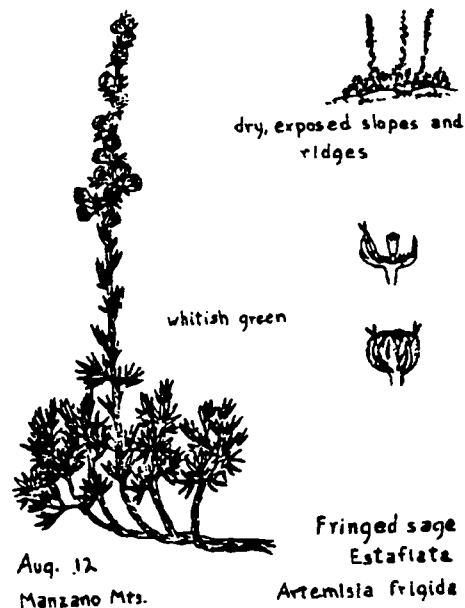
Bill photographs with a Minolta X700 and a Nikon 8008 using 50 mm Macro closeup lenses. He takes rolls and rolls of film in order to get just the photo he wants. Those darned plants are always blowing in the wind when you want their picture!



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## FLORA NEOMEXICANA: Old Plant Species

by Robert Sivinski

The fossil record reveals the sequence of vascular plant evolution and shows us that some of the most ancient types of plants, such as gymnosperms and lycopods, are still successful and with us in these modern times. Yet most of the existing species in these primitive classes belong to large, actively evolving genera (*Pinus*, *Juniperus*, *Ephedra*, etc.) and are of relatively recent origin. A few, however, are the last living remnants of a lineage of species that were common in very ancient times. For instance, sequoias and ginkos were abundant in the forest habitats of dinosaurs, but now survive as the unique *Sequoia sempervirens* and *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (redwood) of California and the solitary *Ginkgo biloba* of Asia. The extreme age of these species is evident in the fossil record, but it is also indicated by their isolated position in their evolutionary line (phylogeny). Over a long period of time, most or all close relatives have become extinct. The remaining species is a living fossil and an isolated relict of an entire lineage. Most modern plant groups are not well represented in the fossil record. We cannot precisely tell when and where they originated, but systematic taxonomists have provided important clues to the relative age of some species.

The New Mexico flora does not contain any living fossils analogous to the ginko. Yet we do have species that are phylogenetically isolated and, by inference, can be considered relatively old. Very small plant families with primitive characteristics come to mind. The Saururaceae (Lizard's tail Family) is a relatively primitive, small family of five genera and only seven species. It is represented in New Mexico by *Anemopsis californica* (yerba mansa). This unique plant is confined to southwestern North America where it occupies valley bottoms and alkaline cienegas. *Anemopsis* is a monotypic (single-species) genus and a terminal remnant of an evolutionary branch. Most of its surviving family relatives are also monotypic genera and geographically isolated from one another (ex. *Saururus* in eastern North America and *Houttuynia* in eastern Asia). It appears the Saururaceae was a larger, more diverse group of plants in ancient times and is now reduced to a few isolated relict species.

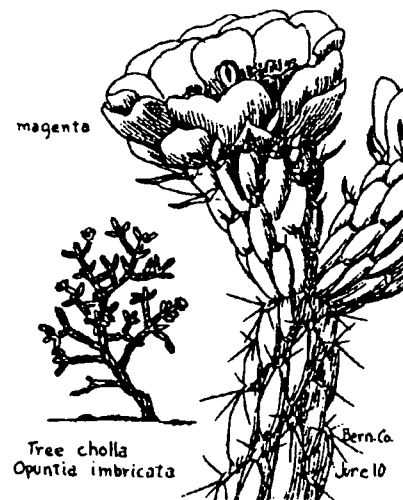
The Crossosomataceae (Crossosoma Family) is another old, small family (3 genera). This American family of woody shrubs is probably a surviving offshoot of the ancestral lineage that evolved into the Rosaceae (Rose Family). *Apacheria chiricahuensis* (cliff brittlebush) is a rare representative of this family that is confined to cliffs in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. *Apacheria* is a monotypic genus and the last remnant of its generic lineage. The small genus *Crossosoma* (not in NM) has a little more genetic variability (2 species), but the more diverse and genetically variable genus *Glossopetalon* (greasebush) will carry the Crossosoma Family into the future.

During the middle Tertiary (30-40 million years ago), the continental interior of North America was becoming drier and creating new environments for plant evolution. Some plant groups evolved into arid plant lineages that are uniquely American. A few of these are presently monotypic genera which fit uncomfortably into large families where they have been placed by most taxonomists. They have no close living relatives within their families and, therefore, show signs of relative old age. *Koeberlinia spinosa* (crucifixion-thorn) was, until recently, considered the only species

of its own family (Koeberliniaceae). It is now placed in the larger Capparaceae (Caper Family), but is a unique branch of that family tree. *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* (greasewood) has been an odd member of the Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family), but some taxonomists have recently made a proposal to place it in its own monotypic family (Sarcobataceae). These two plants are examples of our several monotypic arid land genera that formerly belonged to larger groups of related species in ancient times.

It is tempting to take this line of inference out to its limits by wondering if the small genera in large, highly evolved families can also be considered old. I suspect this is not always the case. Some monotypic genera may be of recent evolutionary origin and weakly distinguished from related large genera. For instance in the Aster Family, the monotypic *Dicranocarpus* (pitchfork) is a highly specialized, self-fertile annual with heteromorphic fruits. It seems more highly evolved than, or at least contemporaneous with, species in the larger related genera *Heterosperma* or *Bidens* (beggar-ticks). Yet in most cases of small or monotypic genera, the phylogenetically isolated species are probably relatively older than most members of larger genera in the same family. I have little doubt that the solitary *Engelmannia* (Engelman daisy) is older than numerous species of *Erigeron* (fleabane) - many so recently evolved they are barely distinguishable. Likewise in the Fabaceae (Pea Family), *Parryella* (dunebroom) is a small genus of only two shrubby species. These are probably older than most species in the rapidly evolving genus *Dalea*. The unique *Peraphyllum ramosissimum* (squaw apple) of the Rose Family has definitely been around longer than most members of the huge genus *Crataegus* (hawthorn). Which is likely older? - the monotypic *Scleropogon* (burro grass) or any of the numerous *Aristida* species (three-awn) that share its habitat. I think the former.

At any age, all small genera of only one or two species are very important to our concept of biodiversity. As the solitary representatives of entire phylogenetic lines, they are more genetically unique than species in large genera with lots of living relatives. Some of these phylogenetically isolated plants are very old, yet often very successful. *Sarcobatus*, *Koeberlinia*, and many other monotypic genera are frequently the dominant plants in their habitats. Even *Anemopsis* occurs in vigorous stands and with significant genetic variability between populations. Old does not always mean decrepit.



## New Taos Chapter is forming:

Under the leadership of NPSNM members Sally and Andy Wasowski and others in the Taos area, a new NPS-NM Chapter is forming. Over 50 persons turned out for the first meeting in March and a second meeting will be held at 7pm April 8 in the Community Room at the Taos Public Library. Tentatively meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month; for more information about programs and future activities contact Andy Wasowski, program chair, at 776-1498 or Sandra Ross, president, at 758-5373. Many new members and NPS members who live in the Taos/Rancho de Taos area were in attendance. Officers were elected and the chapter will petition to the next meeting of the Board to become an official chapter. We welcome new members and the new activity in this beautiful part of New Mexico, and hope that other chapters will be able to help the officers and members of the new chapter with ideas and suggestions.

## Notes from the February Board Meeting.

Officers and Directors of NPS-NM met at the Sevilleta Long Term Ecological Site on February 21. Five guests were also in attendance. The Agenda included routine items such as approving minutes of September 1997 Board meeting in Gallup; membership report; publication report and accepting the nominating committee's report for officers for the next two years; reports from our six chapters and a report from our booth at the Festival of the Cranes; presentation of the final draft of "Chihuahuan Desert Garden" publication; approval of the plans for the 1998 Annual Meeting in Amarillo with the Texas and Oklahoma Native Plant Societies. Babs Peck, Treasurer, reported on our current finances and introduced the progress on the Endowment Fund. We have a balance of \$54,828 and are progressing towards an Endowment. We needed to name an organization to be the recipients of our treasury if we should cease being an organization, and there are certain other By Law changes needed. After some discussion we voted to name The Nature Conservancy of New Mexico as our recipient. Before the September meeting we will have the formal documents and the lawyers papers ready to set up our Endowment. This is the first year the State treasury has returned to the chapters \$2 for each membership (when the dues increased from \$10 to \$12 in 1997 the Board voted to return the increase to the chapters). During our "working lunch" we discussed 'Noxious Weeds' and other conservation issues. Dean Ricer presented the work that is being done in Carlsbad with the State Highway Department and the Carlsbad Desert State Park. Materials from chapters and other organizations was distributed. Under New Business we accepted the offer of Jim Peck to renovate our Traveling Exhibit. We discussed options for other publications and affiliations, but postponed decisions until we see how the sales for Chihuahuan Desert Gardens progresses. One long topic postponed from the morning was the mechanism for making available \$1000 grants and awards for education and native plant demonstration gardens (see our Retreat Goals statement in Nov./Dec. Newsletter). We awarded our first grant, a teacher training proposal, to Dr. Jack Carter \$1000 for ten scholarships for teachers to attend a summer course in Field Botany and Natural History at Western New Mexico University. Tim McKimmie is developing an application form for our new small grants and awards program which will be reviewed in September; we anticipate making awards twice a year. Our next Board meeting will be in Albuquerque on September 12.

## Few and Far Between:

### Moments in the North American Desert

by John Martin Campbell. Museum of New Mexico Press. 1997.  
Book Review by Deb Thorn Swetnam

To some, the desert conjures up stark images that are heartbreakingly glorious, to others a hot, dusty misery. We that live in the North American Desert often have a love - hate relationship with it. In the end, if you don't like the desert, it drives you away. On the other hand, if you stay, and get to know the desert, you can enjoy it even in its extremes. To know the desert better, it helps to understand its origins, its characteristics, and how people have lived in it as Joseph Martin Campbell aptly explains. He has an eclectic background. Most recently, a photographer, he is also an explorer, trained in the natural sciences, who has worked as a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution and as director of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology. He grew up in the Great Basin Desert of Washington and much of this book concentrates on those moments.

It is a small coffee table book of mostly black-and-white photographs of the Great Basin, Mojave, Chihuahuan, and Sonoran deserts. Although, it goes into the plants and animals of these deserts, the emphasis is on geology. Campbell, like John McPhee, enjoys describing a place based on its geologic origins. His explanations are very concise and easy to follow. The photographs depict the dramatic contrasts of the desert, the light and shadow, the expanse of sand and gravel with one plant. There are no pictures of humans in the desert, but only their artifacts, abandoned dwellings, and scattered beads. It leaves one with the feeling, that eventually, the desert will reclaim whatever people have wrought. The text is not a poetic song of the desert, rather it has a very pleasant, readable textbook quality about it.

This book will appeal to both the novice and the expert, in taking a look at one man's encounter with the desert and his interpretations of how these deserts came to be. The comparisons of the deserts are accurate and interesting for the student of the desert ecosystem. If however, you are looking for an emphasis on desert plants, this is not the book. It is, though, a very good general survey of the North American Desert. "It is hard to exaggerate the grandeur of a desert storm. In an otherwise blue sky it comes as a coal-black curtain full of lightning and thunder and millions of gallons of water," says Campbell. No matter how much geology makes a desert, its still poetry that describes it best!



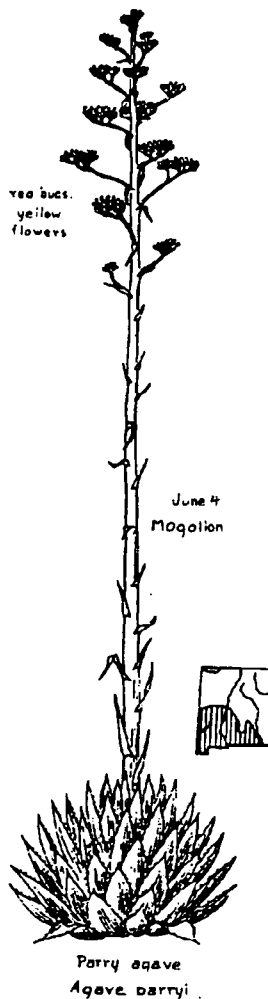
## TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY FOR GNPS

Sometime during the spring of 1988, a small group of plant enthusiasts began getting together to form a chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico in southwest New Mexico. The name Gila Native Plant Society was decided upon and according to records preserved by Anita Morton, twenty-five members were on record as of September 1, 1988. Of those twenty-five, Ralph Fisher, Ron Flemke, Frank and Joyce Knaus, Jack and Lenore Moody, Anita Morton, Stuart and May O'Byrne, Hiram and Annette Parent, Elisabeth Simon, Becky Smith, Jim and Deb Swetnam, and Dale and Marian Zimmerman remain members to this day.

Roger Larson designed the GNPS logo that we use to symbolize typical plants of the Gila region — three needles of the Ponderosa Pine, a yucca stalk, a Pinon Pine branch, an Alligator Juniper branch and an oak leaf. The intervals between the plant panels symbolize the mountains and the phases of the moon through the seasons in the Southwest.

This ambitious group hosted the Annual Meeting of the NPS-NM on October 1 and 2 at the Bear Mountain Guest Ranch north of Silver City. The program included a tour of native gardens in the area. According to the map that was provided to guests, Silver City was a much smaller place in 1988.

Thanks! Anita for preserving all this information.



## SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TEACHERS TO STUDY THE LOCAL FLORA

At the February meeting of the Board of Directors of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico a grant of \$1000.00 was approved which will be awarded to ten inservice teachers in amounts of \$100.00 each. In order to receive these awards each teacher will enroll and successfully complete a three credit hour course in field botany. The course will be offered at Western New Mexico University. It will be designed to assist interested teachers in improving their knowledge of the local flora, provide experience in the use of the available literature to identify unknown plant species, and assist them in planning class activities they may wish to use with their students. The course will be open to all students and the awards will be made to the teachers on a first come basis.

The course number and title are: BIOL 120 - Biology of the Southwest. This 3 credit hour field and laboratory course will be taught during Mini Session III, from 6 - 21 July, and from 8:00 to 11:50 am, Monday through Friday. Field trips will be taken to critical ecosystems in southwest New Mexico and laboratory activities will be conducted in the Natural Sciences Department, WNMU. Dr. Jack Carter will be the instructor.

For additional information please contact Jack Carter at (505) 388-9221.

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**Reminder: NM-OK-TX joint Annual Meeting** will be held in and around Amarillo, October 16-18, 1998. The Headquarters for the meeting will be the Radison Inn.

Those who wish to present papers or want further information should contact:

Peter Loos, Conroe TX  
281 362-1107  
[cyrilla@flex.net](mailto:cyrilla@flex.net)

or Pat Ploegsma, Lubbock  
806 863-3598  
[ploegsma@hub.ofthe.net](mailto:ploegsma@hub.ofthe.net)

### Books for sale by the NPSNM, May 1998

	Retail	NPS-NM Discount Price
Alpine Wildflowers of the Rocky Nountains (Duft & Mosely, 1989)	9.95	8.00
Arizona Flora (Kearney & Peebles, 1960)	80.00	64.00
Audubon Guide to Wildflowers, Western (Spellenberg, 1979)	17.95	14.40
Barren, Wild and Worthless: Living in the Chihuahuan Desert (Tweit, 1995)	19.95	16.00
Botanical Latin (Stearns, 1983)	39.95	32.00
Cacti of the Southwest (Earle, 1963)	13.50	10.80
Chihuahuan Desert Gardens (Magee & McKimmie, 1998)	7.00	5.00
Collecting, Processing, and Germinating Seeds of Wildland Plants (Young, 1986)	24.95	21.50
Colorado Flora: Eastern Slope (Weber, 1990) HB	32.50	26.00
Colorado Flora: Western Slope (Weber, 1987) HB	32.50	26.00
Common Edible & Useful Plants of the West (Sweet, 1976)	4.95	4.00
Common Flora of the Playa Lakes (Haukos & Smith, 1997)	18.95	15.20
Common Plants of the Grand Canyon (Stockard, 1979)	4.50	3.60
Desert and Mountain Plants of the Southwest (Leake, 1993)	18.95	15.20
Desert Plants: Recipes and Remedies (Shields, 1989)	9.95	8.00
Desert Accents (AZ Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
Desert Grasses (AZ Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
Desert Ground Cover and Vines (AZ Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
Desert Shrubs (AZ Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
Desert Trees (AZ Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
Desert Wildflowers (Az. Native Plant Society)	2.00*	1.80*
***Buy the set of six and save! !!	11.00	9.50
Drip Irrigation for Every Landscape & All Climates (Kourik, 1992)	15.00	12.00
Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mts. (Harrington, 1967)	16.00	13.60
Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie (Kindscher, 1987)	12.95	10.40
Favorite Flowers of the Cumbres and Toltec (Dolan, 1996)	12.00	9.60
Field Guide to Grasses of New Mexico (Allred, 1995)	14.95	14.95
Field Guide to the Plants of Arizona (Epple, 1995)	24.95	20.00
Field Guide to SW & Texas Plants (Niehaus, et al., 1984)	17.95	14.40
Flora of the Great Plains (Great Plains Flora Assoc., 1986)	55.00	44.00
Flowering Plants of New Mexico 3rd Ed. (Ivey, 1995)	40.00	32.00
Flowering Plants of the Southwest Woodlands (Foxy & Hoard, 1984)	16.00	12.80
Flowers of the Southwest Deserts (Dodge & Janish, 1985)	9.95	8.00
Flowers of the Southwest Mountains (Armberger & Janish, 1982)	9.95	8.00
A Full Life in a Small Place (Bowers, 1993)	14.95	12.00
A Garden of Wildflowers (Art, 1986)	12.95	10.40
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Grasses of Southwestern United States (Gould, 1951)	22.50	18.00
Grasses of the Trans-Pecos & Adjacent Areas (Powell, 1994)	29.95	24.00
The Great Southwest Nature Fact Book (Tweit, 1993)	14.95	12.00
Healing with Plants in the American West (Kay, 1996)	19.95	16.00
How to Grow Native Plants of Texas & the Southwest (Nokes, 1986)	37.50	30.00
Growing Desert Plants from Windowsill to Garden (Hodoba, 1995)	24.95	20.00
Gymnosperms of New Mexico (Carter, 1994)	6.00	6.00
Handbook of Rocky Mountain Plants (Nelson, 1969)	24.95	20.00
How to Photograph Flowers, Plants and Landscapes (Fell, 1980)	9.95	8.00
Indian Uses of Native Plants (Murphey, 1959)	3.50	3.25
Landscaping for Water Conservation: XERISCAPE (Denver Water Dept., 1989)	5.75	4.60
Landscaping for Wildlife (MN Dept. Natural Resources, 1986)	10.00	8.80
Landscaping with Native Plants of Texas & Southwest (Miller, 1991)	19.95	16.00
Landscaping with Native Texas Plants: Region by Region (Wasowski, 1988)	37.95	30.40
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Low Water Use Plants for California and the Southwest (Schuler, 1993)	17.95	14.40
Medicinal Plants of Deserts & Canyons (Moore, 1989)	13.95	11.20
Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West (Moore, 1979)	13.95	11.20
Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie (Kindscher, 1992)	12.95	10.40
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Native Plants for Southwestern Landscapes (Mielke, 1993)	24.00	20.00
Natural by Design (Phillips, 1995)	35.00	28.00
New Mexico Range Plants (NMSU Circular #374)	3.00	2.80
New Mexico Vegetation (Dick-Peddie, 1993)	45.00	36.00
100 Desert Wildflowers of the Southwest (Bowers, 1989)	7.95	6.40
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Plants for Natural Gardens (Phillips, 1995)	27.50	22.00
Photographing Wildflowers (Blacklock, 1987)	12.95	10.40
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Santa Fe Bouquet (Hughes & Post, 1989)	4.95	4.00
Seeds of Woody Plants of North America (Young, 1992)	49.95	40.00
70 Common Cacti of the SW (Fischer, 1989)	7.95	6.40
Shrubs and Trees of the Southwest Deserts (Bowers, 1993)	9.95	8.00
Shrubs and Trees of the Uplands (Elmore, 1976)	9.95	8.00
Southwestern Landscaping with Native Plants (Phillips, 1987)	19.95	16.00
A Taste of Nature: Edible Plants of the SW (Farnsworth)	15.95	12.80
Texas Wildflowers: A Field Guide (Lohmiller)	14.95	12.00
Trees & Shrubs of New Mexico (Carter, 1997)	29.95	24.00
Trees & Shrubs of Trans-Pecos Texas (Powell, 1998)	34.00	28.00
Trees, Shrubs & Woody Vines of the SW (Vines, 1962)	72.00	60.00
The Tumbleweed Gourmet (Niethammer, 1987)	12.95	10.40
Weeds of the West (Western Society of Weed Science, 1992)	22.00	20.00
Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners (Dunmire & Tierney, 1997)	22.50	18.00
Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province (Dunmire & Tierney, 1995)	22.50	18.00
A Wildflower by any Other Name (Nilsson, 1994)	14.95	12.00
The Wildflower Gardener's Guide: Calif., Desert SW & Northern Mexico (Art)	12.95	10.40
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Wildflowers of the Guadalupe Mountains (Warnock, 1974)	11.95	9.60
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## Call for Nominations

The ballot for NPSNM board and officers will be published in the next issue of the newsletter. A nominating committee is in place, headed by Jack Carter. Additional nominations may be made by any group of 5 or more NPSNM members. If you wish to place other names in nomination please get them to Jack Carter or Tim McKimmie, (*Newsletter* editor) by June 1, 1998.

Many thanks to  
Robert Dewitt Ivey  
for permission to use the  
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from his book  
*Flowering Plants of  
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